

# Edible Boulevards

## Improving Access to Fruits and Vegetables in Minneapolis' Green Zones



By Michelle Shaw

# What were the initial hopes and dreams?

1. Change the ordinance in Minneapolis to allow fruits and vegetables to be grown on boulevards.
2. Increase food access in the Green Zones.
3. Bring community together! Have them involved in growing their own food.
4. Be intentional about the produce that's planted within each cultural community. (decolonize)
5. Have the City decrease salt use on the roads.
6. Learn by doing!

# Who was involved in this City pilot creation?

- Council Member Reich
- Northside Green Zone (part of our Work Plan)
- Southside Green Zone
- Southside Community Member Rico Morales
- Jim Doten, Minneapolis Environmental Services
- Sustainability Department

# What did we do?

**Step 1:** Recruited participants in Jordan and East Phillips.

**Step 2:** Acquired funding for soil tests, resources and community expertise.

**Step 3:** Conducted pre-survey/post survey and home visit.

**Step 3:** Tested soil at each home site.

**Step 4:** After soil test results were interpreted by Anna Lindquist at Macalester, results were shared with participants and options presented: do a raised bed or an in-ground bed.

**Step 5:** Prepped participants for the gardening process.

**Step 6:** Compensated urban ag. group to teach participants how to create gardens (from grass to planting) on their boulevards.

**Step 7:** Follow-ups with post-survey and photo request.

# Were there any obstacles?

## No Funding, CoVid and LEAD!

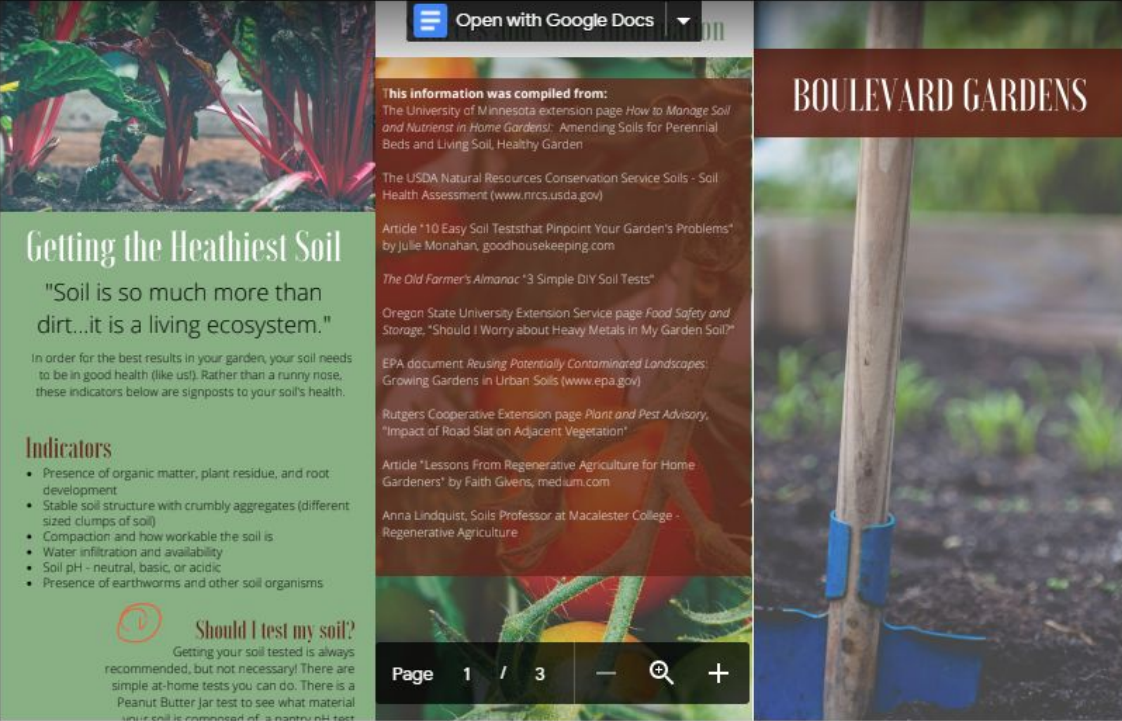
- Early June, we suddenly didn't have any funding to do soil testing from the City.
- CoVid made it more difficult to recruit and to meet with potential partners.
- CoVid also required developing a safe process for having volunteers and staff go out to support the participants.
- For those between 25-100 ppm of lead, they were given the option of doing a raised bed or an in-ground one. (100 is acceptable in MN, although I'd like to shoot for 0). Any over 100 automatically would have a raised bed.
- 3 people dropped out as a result.



**Boulevard Garden (1).pdf**

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# BOULEVARD GARDENS


## Getting the Healthiest Soil

"Soil is so much more than dirt...it is a living ecosystem."

In order for the best results in your garden, your soil needs to be in good health (like us). Rather than a runny nose, these indicators below are signposts to your soil's health.

### Indicators

- Presence of organic matter, plant residue, and root development
- Stable soil structure with crumbly aggregates (different sized clumps of soil)
- Compaction and how workable the soil is
- Water infiltration and availability
- Soil pH - neutral, basic, or acidic
- Presence of earthworms and other soil organisms



#### Should I test my soil?

Getting your soil tested is always recommended, but not necessary! There are simple at-home tests you can do. There is a Peanut Butter Jar test to see what material your soil is composed of, a nontoxic pH test

This information was compiled from:

- The University of Minnesota extension page *How to Manage Soil and Nutrients in Home Gardens: Amending Soils for Perennial Beds and Living Soil, Healthy Garden*
- The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Soils - Soil Health Assessment ([www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov))
- Article "10 Easy Soil Tests that Pinpoint Your Garden's Problems" by Julie Monahan, [goodhousekeeping.com](http://goodhousekeeping.com)
- The Old Farmer's Almanac* "3 Simple DIY Soil Tests"
- Oregon State University Extension Service page *Food Safety and Storage: "Should I Worry about Heavy Metals in My Garden Soil?"*
- EPA document *Reusing Potentially Contaminated Landscapes: Growing Gardens in Urban Soils* ([www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov))
- Rutgers Cooperative Extension page *Plant and Pest Advisory, "Impact of Road Salt on Adjacent Vegetation"*
- Article "Lessons From Regenerative Agriculture for Home Gardeners" by Faith Givens, [medium.com](http://medium.com)
- Anna Lindquist, Soils Professor at Macalester College - Regenerative Agriculture

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# Where did the funding and donations come from?

- Hennepin County Master Gardener Volunteer Program
- Macalester College
- Mother Earth Gardens
- Lowes
- Bachmans
- Home Depot
- Baker's Creek Heirloom Seeds
- Dave and Toni Hauser
- 4 additional community members who donated seedlings

# Even More Partners!

- Growing North Minneapolis (Thank you, Patsy Parker!!!) Staff and Volunteers
- Little Earth Farm Thank you, Chad Hebert!!!) Staff and Volunteers
- Professor Anna Lindquist and her Soil Class Students, Macalester College
- Waite Park Community Council
- East Phillips Neighborhood Institute (our fiscal sponsor)
- Steve Dreyer, Ventura Village
- Ian Flomer
- Arielle Goebel
- Volunteers from MN350's Food Systems Team



# What were the donations and funding needed for?

- Testing every site's soil before building the garden (arsenic and lead too!).
- Paying one urban agriculture group on the Northside (Growing North Minneapolis) and one on the Southside (Little Earth Farm) to mentor the participants with how to build their gardens, either in-ground or a raised bed.
- Donations of lumber, screws, soil, compost and manure
- Plant and seed donations
- Time and transportation of goods and soil tests
- Time and helping to build the garden beds
- Time needed for reading soil test results

# Most importantly, the participants!





# In-Ground Gardens

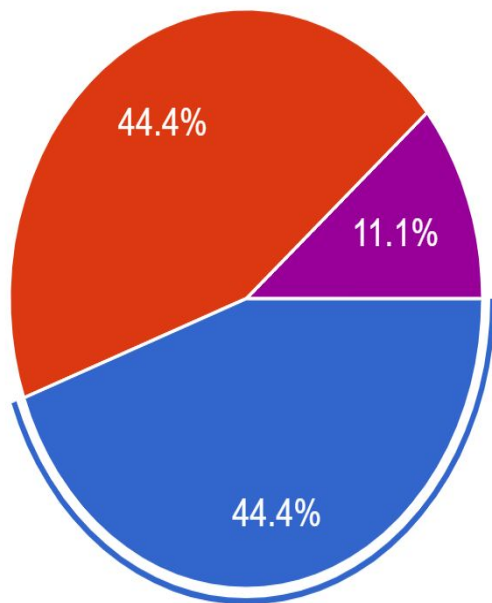


# Raised Bed Gardens



Knowing what we now know about having lead levels of 35-135 parts per million in 3 of our neighborhoods, what do you think we should recom...dinance change to include fruit and vegetables?

9 responses

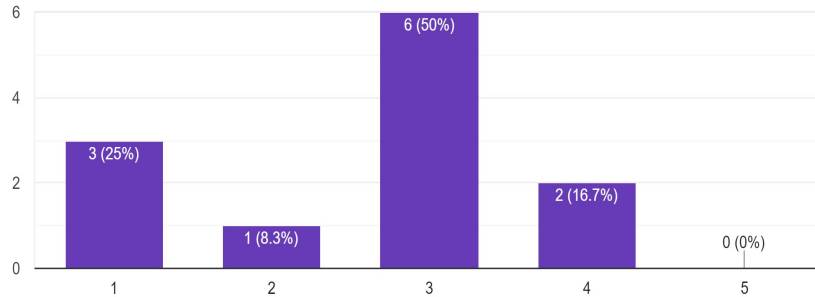


- Move forward with changing the ordinance, BUT educate people about safe gardening practices when there's...
- Commit City funding (and a staff/intern) to a second summer of this City pilot s...
- Change the ordinance right away.
- There's no way we can change the ordinance now.
- maybe a combination of the first two, making sure there is some City fundin...

# On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you know about transforming a lawn into a food garden?

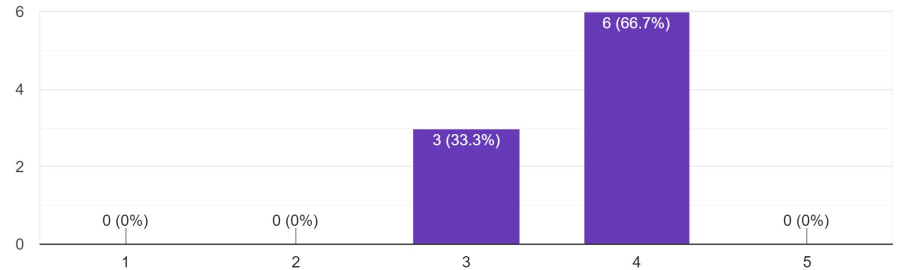
Pre-Survey=12 responses

On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you know about transforming a lawn into a food garden?  
12 responses



Post-Survey=9 responses

On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you know about transforming a lawn into a food garden?  
9 responses



# How have our goals changed?

1. Provide access to fresh produce to anyone who needs it.  
(How much has hunger in America changed in 2 years?)
2. Teach participants gardening skills they can use for self-sustainability and to mentor others.
3. Partner with urban ag. nonprofits on the Northside (Growing North Minneapolis) and Southside (Little Earth Farm) to educate community members and create youth mentorships.
4. Identify ways to safely garden with lead in the soil.
5. Explore possible bioremediators for lead.
6. Learn by doing.
7. Lead to amendment of city ordinance.

# Future Goals as Facilitator and for the Group

- Have more participants who are Native, Latinx, Black, and Communities of Color.
- Invite people to the table now who are from these communities to work on growing the project.
- Work on grant writing with folks from both Green Zones.
- Continue to build relationships with people in both neighborhoods.
- Continue to support past participants through planting resources, volunteers and possible staff time.
- Have a plan in place for lead.
- Move towards City ordinance amendment.
- Allow certain fruit trees to be planted on our boulevards.

Is anyone interested in doing planning for Edible Boulevards from the Green Zone?